MONTEREY NEWS

November 2008
VOLUME XXXVIII · Number 11

The Town

Highways and Operations

Selectman Scott Jenssen asked Director of Operations Maynard Forbes if Monterey was set with a supply of salt for this winter. Maynard said that the town has entered into a purchasing agreement with other Berkshire County towns, and that Monterey shouldn't suffer too badly if there is a severe winter. Jenssen gave an overview of the Salt & Sand/Winter Maintenance seminar he attended in Stockbridge.

A new plow for the 4500 was swapped for the one that came with the truck (no cost.) The Kenworth truck was taken to New Hampshire to have the dump body installed.

The Grenadier sign that hangs from the Town Hall sign across from the Town Hall was discussed. Building Commissioner Don Torrico had asked that it be removed and that a request for a sign permit be filed with the Building Department. Forbes said that he had given the Grenadiers permission to hang the sign about two years ago, as long as the size matched

Bob Boisselle

During the October 24th installation ceremony for Monterey's new Postmaster, Beth Carpenter (r), in the Monterey Meetinghouse, Beth presented the Monterey Library with a framed enlargement of the Dr. Seuss commemorative stamp. Accepting for the library were (l–r) Esther Heffernan, assistantant director; Mark Makuc, library director; and Will Marsh, library trustee. Visible in back is State Senator Benjamin Downing. *See article on p. 4.*

the town sign, and as long as they went through the proper sign approval process with the Building Department.

Grace Road is officially closed, although the "Road Closed" sign disappeared recently. Forbes said he will try to work on the road sometime soon.

A special public meeting was called on October 27 to discuss Fairview Road. In attendance were Ray Tryon, Eric and Holly Montgomery, and the Select Board. The town spends around $15,000 a year maintaining this road, which is still washing out and flooding in spite of previous attempts to remedy the situation. The Select Board agreed to meet the Montgomerys on Thursday afternoon, October 30, at the bottom of the road to discuss how best to address the problem.

Police Matters

- Suspicious activity on driveway off Main Road; vehicle was gone when police responded.
- Two false alarms, Main Road and Hupi Road.
- Jewelry stolen from a residence on Fairview Road, apparently by a house sitter not a break-in.
- Person under house arrest on Brett Road missing after electronic monitoring device went off; warrant issued.
- Lockout at the Post Office.
- Stray dog, Mt. Hunger Road, owned by someone from North Adams; taken to Marge Gulick's veterinary facility.
- 911, Gould Road.

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The *Monterey News* is published monthly under the auspices of Monterey United Church of Christ, Monterey, MA 01245.

- Tools reported stolen from contractor working on Woodlawn Drive.
- Another speed limit radar trailer and a stationary speed limit warning have been purchased, to address speeding in the town. There have been many favorable comments on the current speed trailer.

Lake Matters

Chris Blair came in to discuss the Lake Garfield drawdown. He said the Conservation Commission has been very pleased with Maynard Forbes' handling of the drawdown, which began on October 15. He said that the new Order of Intent was to give Maynard as much flexibility and authority as possible to adjust the drawdown to the weather conditions, to help prevent flooding in severe weather.

A permanent lake level marker for Lake Garfield was discussed.

A special permit was granted for a project on Route 57 bordering Lake Buel. The property, formerly known as Blue Heron Landing, will be divided into three residential lots, after the existing buildings are removed.

Foresight Land Services met with the Board at length to discuss blueprints of Lake Garfield and a survey of the town beach.

Town Matters

Inter-Departmental Secretary Melissa Noe attended a user training course for our website operations. She will post the Town Bylaws on the website as an HTML document. While this will not be an official copy, it can be used for informational purposes.

Bob Lazzarini from the Zoning Board of Appeals came in to discuss a replacement for alternate Susan Cooper, who is on a leave of absence in Australia. A motion was made and seconded to have the Select Board nominate a Zoning Board alternate, after interviewing candidates at a future date.

Notice: Anyone interested in serving as an alternate on the Zoning Board of Appeals should contact Melissa Noe at the Town Hall and make arrangements to appear at this interview.

The Select Board, after consulting with Town Counsel, informed the Planning Board that they need written notification of John Sellew's resignation before they appoint Bridget Krans to fill Sellew's position. Due to an omission on the 2008 Town Meeting warrant, Bridget needs to call the Ethics Commission to determine if filing the Special Employee disclosure will cover her.

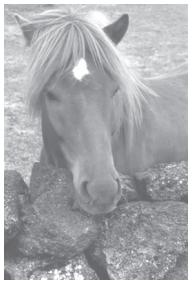
There will be no Select Board Meeting on November 10 because two members will not be able to attend.

Trick or treating will be held on Friday, October 31, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

School Matters

Candidates for the Southern Berkshire Regional District School Committee will meet with the public at Mt. Everett High School on Thursday night, October 30, beginning with dinner at 6 p.m., hosted by the Mt. Everett High School student government. The candidates will answer questions from the audience in a forum beginning at 7 p.m. (See candidates' profiles and statements beginning on p. 4.)

On October 22, representatives from



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the Select Boards of eight towns in the Southern Berkshire and Berkshire Hills School Districts met at the Mason Library to explore how the two districts can work together to save money. Jon Sylbert represented Monterey.

Energy Matters

The Select Board met with Tom Smith of National Grid to discuss energy saving options available to the town. National Grid can give a free audit to town buildings and small businesses, and will pay for 70 percent of the cost of implementing the recommendations; the remaining 30 percent can be repaid with no interest, with a discount for immediate payment.

Kutsher's Sports Academy

The Select Board received a letter from KSA's attorney questioning the $5000 fine that was issued because KSA operated two sessions without the proper permit. Peter Kolodziej will itemize the reasons for the fine. The Department of Environmental Protection also is questioning KSA's listing as a public water supply.

Technology Committee

The Southern Berkshire Technology Committee, a community-led group, was formed in July, consisting of representatives from the towns of Great Barrington, Alford, Egremont, Monterey, Mt. Washington, New Marlborough, Otis, Sandisfield, Sheffield, and Tyringham. Monterey's representatives are Monica Webb and Michael Storch. The committee's mission is facilitating the deployment of modern broadband infrastructure and services to the rural communities of the region.

On July 28, the Massachusetts Broadband Institute was formed by the Massachusetts legislature, and $40 million was designated for investment in broadband infrastructure in the commonwealth, to support deployment of affordable broadband and ubiquitous access to unserved citizens.

The Southern Berkshire Technology Committee elected Charles Flynn, chair of Egremont's Technology Committee and head of technology for Lee Schools, as chairperson. Tim Newman, chair of New Marlborough Technology Committee, was elected vice chair, and Kristin Cherin of the Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce was elected as secretary.

The Committee elected Brian Killeen, Executive Director of the Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, as a candidate for the Massachusetts Broadband Institute. He feels that access to broadband would enable the establishment and growth of small to medium-sized businesses in the region, and would also facilitate telecommuting, which would contribute to the growth of the local economy.

A meeting of the Technology Committee was held on Wednesday, October 15. According to Charles Flynn, chairperson, a better alternative than DSL, which he feels will be obsolete in five years, is a Verizon fiber optic technology known as FIOS. Verizon has been introducing FIOS to the state for the past three years; 30 or more places will get the service in 2009, although Verizon hasn't specified what cities and towns will be next.

There will be other broadband meetings in South County's rural communities over the course of the next few months.

— Sue Protheroe

Jon Sylbert

At the October 25th Halloween Harvest Party, sponsored by Park Commission.

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Beth Carpenter installed as Monterey Postmaster

Winona Beth Carpenter was installed as postmaster of the Monterey Post Office on Friday, October 24, at 1 p.m. in the Monterey Meetinghouse.

Peter S. Brown, retired postmaster of Great Barrington, was master of ceremonies. Carpenter's mother, Winona M. Harding, led the Pledge of Allegiance. State Senator Benjamin B. Downing and State Representative William "Smitty" Pignatelli presented Beth with citations from the state legislature and Theresa Bruso, manager of Post Office operations for western Massachusetts acknowledged her achievement.

Massachusetts Postal District Manager John W. Powers III administered the oath of office while the new postmaster's daughter, Jasmine, held the Bible.

Carpenter began her postal career in 2006 as a postmaster relief in Monterey. She served as officer in charge of Monterey Post Office for nine months before being named postmaster in July. She manages a facility that employs two persons collecting, processing, and delivering mail to more than 600 Post Office boxes.

She is active in her hometown of New Marlborough, serving as a volunteer fire fighter for the New Marlborough Fire Department and as a member of its board of directors. She and her husband, Jeffery, have two children, Jeb and Jasmine.

Monterey Postmasters

Below is a list of Monterey Postmasters since the Monterey Post Office was opened, with the dates they were appointed.

Samuel E. Buell, Nov. 2, 1825
Wilbur C. Langdon, Jul. 16, 1842
Milton Judd, Feb.26, 1855
Oscar Mansir, Dec.23, 1863
Wilbur C. Langdon, May 14, 1864
Henry C. Langdon, May 28, 1877
William S. Bidwell, Nov. 23, 1883
Henry W. Langdon, May 29, 1893
Mary M. Langdon, Feb. 10, 1906
Julius D. Miner, May 26, 1906
William T. Martin, Oct. 13, 1933
Felix B. LeMoyne, Officer in Charge (OIC), Dec. 31, 1952
Arthur P. Phillips, Jun. 15, 1953
John A. MacIver, May 13, 1960
Walter M. Parks, OIC, Dec. 12, 1969
Walter M. Parks, Mar. 20, 1971
Patricia A. Hamling, Jun. 02, 2001
Robert C. Winterbottom, OIC, May 13, 2004
Phillip C. Moreau, Jul. 10, 2004
Roderick A. Drees, OIC, Sep. 28, 2006
Roderick A. Drees, Apr. 14, 2007
W. Beth Carpenter, OIC, Oct. 15, 2007
W. Beth Carpenter, Jul. 05, 2008

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Beth presented a framed enlargement of the Dr. Seuss commemorative postage stamp to the children's reading room of the Monterey Library.

Veterans Day Observance

Veterans Day will be celebrated briefly on Tuesday, November 11, on the steps of the Monterey Meetinghouse.

The conclusion of WWI was celebrated in 1918 at 11:00 a.m. on the 11th day of the 11th month. It was called Armistice Day. The name was later changed to Veterans Day in honor of all war veterans.

All veterans are invited to arrive at the church steps at 10:45 a.m. The church bell will be tolled 11 times. A brief prayer for all veterans will be read and at the conclusion, taps will be played on the Library lawn.

You attendance to honor all Veterans will be appreciated.

— Dean P. Amidon, Chairman,
Veterans Memorial Committee

Flu Shot Clinic

A flu shot clinic will be held on Thursday, November 13, from 1 to 3 p.m. in the Monterey Town Hall Meeting Room. The cost is $22.00 (free if you have Medicare). Please wear short sleeves and bring your Medicare card with you. No appointment is necessary. Participants must be 18 years of age or older. Pneumococcal vaccine will be available for those eligible.

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School Committee Candidates' Profiles, Statements

The Southern Berkshire Regional School District Committee has 10 members, with each town in the district allotted the number of seats indicated. Voters from each town vote for candidates from all five towns. Candidates were asked to write a short biography and a statement (in italics below) of their vision for the school district. They are listed alphabetically by town and by candidate. (Thanks to Andrea Scott, co-editor of the Sheffield Times for compiling this article.)

Alford:1 seat, 1 candidate

Linda Silvestri

Silvestri is a graduate of Flushing High School and St. John's University in New York. She attended the New School for Social Research in Manhattan and earned 30 credits in business management and charitable fund raising. She has been employed as an elementary school teacher, a college grants administrator, and a bequests and charitable trusts manager for a leading philanthropic organization. She is now retired.

She has lived in Alford full-time for the past six years. In 1950, her parents purchased a summer cottage in Alford, and her family spent summers in the Berkshires. In 1973, she and her husband built a home in Alford and have enjoyed, with their two girls, school vacations and summers in that home.

She has served on the SBRSD School Committee since March 2006.

Serving on the School Committee has given me an opportunity to serve the community we have enjoyed for many years.

The issues for the future for the SBRSD are not a simple matter. The District is facing ever-increasing energy and healthcare costs, changing demographics, underfunded federal and state mandates, and the need for significant repairs to the primary school building. Despite these challenges, the School Committee will continue to advance the SBRSD excellent educational achievements.

The citizens of the five towns overwhelmingly passed the most recent school budget. This public support lets the newly elected School Committee members know that the townspeople support fair compensation for school employees and agree that the unique student-teacher classroom ratio is one of the main reasons for student success. The challenges are real, but I am confident that the new School Committee will continue the creative strategic planning of the past and that the current educational achievements will continue.

Egremont: 2 seats, 2 candidates

Charles B. Flynn

Flynn, a former Egremont selectman, is the technology administrator for the Lee Public Schools. He was appointed to the School Committee in June 2008.

Flynn entered the field of education shortly after his retirement from the United States Navy in 1994. He began his teaching career at Southern Berkshire Regional School District, leaving in 2001 for the position in Lee when the district was one year into a building and renovation project that included major upgrades and installation of state-of-the-art technology. Using a need-based approach, he assessed what technology was needed in the classroom and designed a networking system that would fully support the administrative and educational requirements of the district. The resulting installation is a centrally managed enterprise-level system of over 400 computers.

Flynn's military experience included service during Vietnam as a Navy medical corpsman. After graduating from the University of Massachusetts, he returned to the Navy as an officer. He spent most of his career on destroyers and frigates in engineering and electronics management, ultimately moving into increasingly responsible leadership positions. He served on the Secretary of the Navy's Naval Research Advisory Committee to examine the impact of advancing technologies on fleet exercise reconstruction and analysis.

Flynn holds a Master of Science in special education from Sage Graduate School in Troy, NY. He has over 30 years of experience in engineering management, training systems analysis, project management, and personnel administration.

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In Massachusetts, as well as throughout the country, ever-increasing importance is being placed on the School Committee's role, in not only setting policy, but also in setting goals for academic achievement, aligning financial resources with the goals for the district, establishing accountability standards, and ensuring there are high quality assessments and academic programs.

With the advent of a regionally elected school committee, it is incumbent upon each of us to ensure effective district and school leadership. We must be aware of, understand, and embrace the diverse culture and demographics of the school district. We need to establish relationships with parents and the community based on trust and use data to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instructional practices, then develop strategies to expand the strengths and remediate weaknesses. We need to engage parents, the community/region, and the school in a partnership for learning.

I am an advocate for excellence in education, fiscal responsibility, and community involvement. Simultaneously, each and every child through young adult, no matter what his or her background, must be afforded every opportunity for success in a safe and respectful academic environment that fully embraces and celebrates learning.

Stephen P. Willig

Born in Queens, NY, Willig, one of six children, grew up in a middle-class suburban neighborhood. He graduated from a New York City public high school (where he met his wife, Cathy Jo Wolff) and continued his education at St. Johns University and University of Wyoming, majoring in recreation and parks administration.

He and Cathy married in 1977 and relocated to South Egremont in 1978. They spent almost two years living and working on a dairy farm, while he worked full time at the Rising Paper Mill in Housatonic. While they were living on the farm, their first child, Daniel, was born. They built a house on Mt. Washington Road in late 1979. In 1980, he began to work at Mead Corp. Specialty Papers in South Lee, where he still works. He is a recipient of Mead's President's Award for Excellence.

Willig has served as a graduate assistant to the Dale Carnegie Course and president of the Hurlbut Fellowship Committee and is currently a member of the board of directors of the Hurlbut Employees Federal Credit Union.

He has served the community as a Junior Achievement volunteer instructor, volunteer fireman, chairman of the board of trustees for the First Congregational Church in South Egremont, and senior warden of Christ Church Episcopal in Sheffield. He is one of Egremont's representatives on the SBRSD School Committee and member of the board of directors for the South Berkshire Educational Collaborative.

Two of his children are graduates of Mt. Everett. Daniel is completing his masters in graphic design at Parsons Institute in NYC, and Kerry is studying for her bachelors degree at U-Mass Boston. Matthew, the youngest, is now a sophomore at Mt Everett. Willig's wife works as a cook and cashier at the SBRSD main campus.

The quality of the educational experience offered at the schools of SBRSD is among the best in the county, and I would venture to say among the best in the state.

My vision for the future of the school district is to continually find ways to improve the quality of education for the children. We also need to foster an environment where the teachers and staff find job satisfaction and compensation sufficient to be able to live within a reasonable commuting distance.

This community is at a critical juncture in its history. Most of our grown children are forced to find work and homes far from their families and friends. Housing here is too expensive and there are very few places to work where they can earn a decent salary. Failure to maintain and improve the quality of education in our district will support the continuing exodus.

Our children need to be clever enough to start businesses here in South County

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or to be educated well enough so that they can find jobs that will support the cost of living here.

Picture this community a couple of generations from now: Who will be living here? Will all of the houses be second homes? Where will the service industry workers live? Will this become like Aspen, Colorado?

Monterey: 1 seat, 1 candidate

Deborah D. Mielke

Mielke is currently the School Committee representative from Monterey. She is beginning her fourth year in that capacity, and last year served as the committee's vice-chair. Over the past three plus years, in addition to attending regularly scheduled School Committee meetings, she has served on various subcommittees including Buildings and Grounds, Finance, and Negotiations and has served as the School Committee representative to the Eagle Fund.

Mielke is a real estate broker with a family-owned firm, Corashire Realty. She is a lifelong resident of the area, having grown up in New Marlborough. She is a graduate of Mt. Everett and the University of Massachusetts. She has resided in Monterey for the past 32 years with her husband, Rick. They have two grown daughters who are also SBRSD alumna.

I look forward to my continued participation on the School Board especially as the District faces some new, as well as old, challenges.

New Marlborough: 2 seats, 3 candidates

Herbert Abelow

Abelow graduated from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania with a BS in economics and proceeded to a career on Wall Street spanning 44 years. He was a managing director responsible for all equity trading at the First Boston Corporation, and over 500 employees were responsible to him worldwide. When Credit Suisse purchased FBC, he left to start a private investment company, which he managed until he retired in 1999.

Abelow was instrumental in starting the Muscular Dystrophy Association of America and the National Association for Learning Disabled. He was a trustee of the Rumsey Hall School in Washington, CT, for 10 years. He worked with underprivileged students in a mentoring program at Columbia University in New York, which selected bright kids not quite up to Columbia's rigorous admission standards, provided them with full scholarships, and then worked with them as surrogate parents and academic coaches as they worked toward their degrees. He mentored three students; one now has a successful career in education, one is a medical doctor, and one is a lawyer.

In 1986 he bought a weekend home in Lenox and became involved in that community as a trustee of the Edith Wharton Restoration and the Lenox Library.

He moved to Mill River and became involved in the community in ways he thought could make a difference. He is the treasurer of both the New Marlborough Village Association and the New Marlborough Historical Society. He works with Elder Services as a driver for Meals on Wheels. He works with his dogs, which are certified therapy dogs by the Good Dog Foundation, three hours a week with children in varying levels of learning.

Currently representing New Marlborough on the School Committee, he also represents Berkshire County schools as the Chairman of District VI of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees.

In this period of financial strain, it is of utmost importance for school committee members to be diligent in the performance of the budget process. We must be able to think outside of the box, to maintain our most important mission—teach our children to the best of their ability to learn, as well as provide them with social skills to become proficient in whatever they wish to do as adults. We must husband our resources and work with the administration, faculty, and parents to ascertain how the district can best provide what our kids need. To accomplish this we should encourage our parents to participate with the school to develop a common understanding of what and how the district will work with the children to maintain a high level of achievement both in the classroom and out. This means striving for academic excellence as well as providing a strong extracurricular experience.

To accomplish this we must involve our entire community. This can be accomplished by strengthening our school councils. It is the responsibility of School Committee members to bring the message of the school into each of our communities, by telling of the great things that are being afforded our kids on a regular basis.

We must provide total transparency to all our constituents. We must have a comprehensive five-year plan so that we all will be able to evaluate whether or not our goals are being met.

I will continue to work on the state level to encourage our legislatures to

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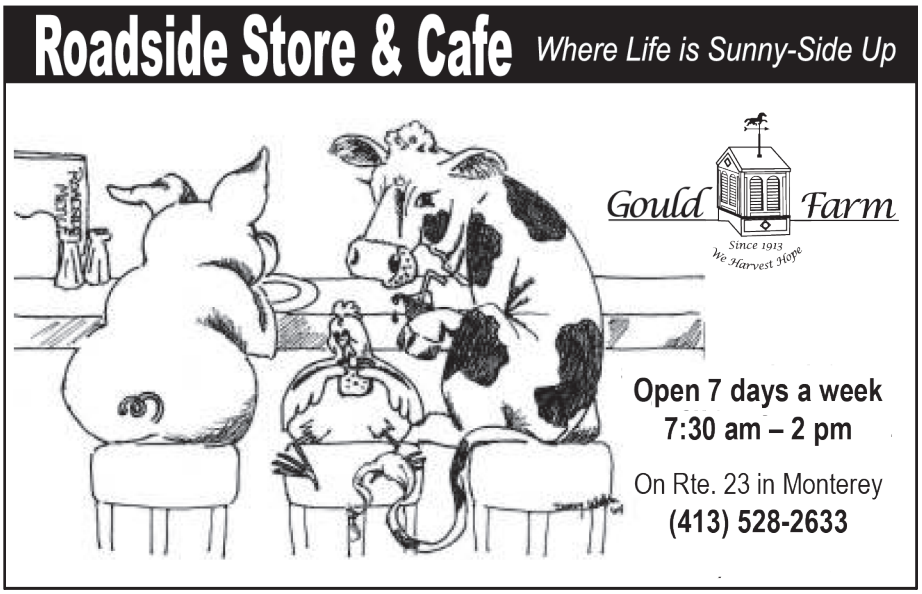

reduce the regulatory abuse by state agencies and to demand coordination and streamlining of the state's 15 accountability, assessment, and accreditation systems that require an average of 160 hours of work for every administrator and teacher in the state to comply with these mandated regulations. I will encourage our communities to work with our elected state representative to expand state funding to the towns and schools rather than pour money into the state bureaucracy.

C. William (Bill) Dunsay

Dunsay was born in 1943 in Buffalo, NY, where his father worked for Curtis-Wright as an engineer in the testing division during World War II. His parents thought it was cute to call him Buffalo Bill. After the war, his parents bought a house in Mount Vernon, NY, a suburb of New York City. Upon entering kindergarten, he discovered that he had another name, Charles. His close friends from the block and in high school called him Billy. He dropped Charles when he went off to college, graduating from SUNY-New Paltz in 1965.

He started his 42-year teaching career in Millerton, NY, as a fourth-grade teacher. He transferred to New Rochelle, NY, for eight years before coming to Sheffield in 1974, when he began teaching in SBRSD as a second-grade teacher. At some point during his career there, a student called him D-man and that evolved into Mr. D. Many former students and parents refer to him that way. His family and friends know him as Bill. He retired from teaching at New Marlborough Central School in a one-to-one laptop computer 2/3 multi-grade class on Dec. 31, 2007. The *Berkshire Eagle* thinks his name is Steven.

He has been married for almost 39 years and has one daughter and four grandchildren. Three of his grandchildren attend New Marlborough Central.

Currently he is a student of photography and is amazed at the complexity involved in making a fine photograph. He loves photography.

I recently attended a workshop for new and prospective members of Massachusetts school committees. The two highest priorities for a school committee are setting policy and proposing a yearly budget. The school committee instructs the administration to carry out the district policies. I want to be sure that we have tight safety and security policies and that they are being followed throughout the district.

I know that teachers deserve professional pay, and providing a well-rounded education for our children is important. The financial crises facing our country will impact our communities and our school budget. I hope that this new committee will focus on how to provide the best quality education for our children. I believe that educational priorities need to be set first and then look at how to pay for them. I believe we should first consider our district vision and which teaching and learning strategies fulfill that vision. We also have an investment in the buildings that must be properly maintained.

We must consider state standards and where we need to improve. As a teacher I know that real learning occurs from creative and spontaneous experiences for teachers and students. The challenge is to merge that with very fine standards set out by the state.

Computer technology has changed our world dramatically. Our district has always been ahead of the curve with substantial hardware, so I would encourage the staff to widen their inclusion of computer technology in their teaching.

Charles McSpiritt

McSpiritt has been a resident of Mill River since the spring of 1988. He is married to Janice, and they have two children. His daughter, Katherine, graduated from Mt. Everett High School in 2006 and is currently a junior engineering major at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. His son, Joseph, is a senior at Mt. Everett.

McSpiritt graduated from the University of Connecticut in 1982 with a BS in physical education and earned a

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masters degree in education from UConn in 1984. After working as assistant men's soccer coach at Bowling Green State University in Ohio, he worked for the Webutuck School District in Amenia, NY, as a physical education teacher, athletic director, varsity boys soccer and boys basketball coach. For the past 15 years, he has worked at Torrington High School in Torrington, CT, where he has served as athletic director, instructional supervisor for physical education and health, and assistant principal.

As a parent in the SBRSD, he has participated in numerous community activities including administration of the Undermountain-Mt. Everett Youth Athletic Association Saturday Soccer and Travel Team programs. He has helped direct the Mt. Everett soccer camp for the past nine years. He has represented New Marlborough on the School Committee for six years, serving as chairperson for five years.

The School Committee should communicate with school administration, parents, and faculty to help the Southern Berkshire Regional School District provide the resources that the students will need to participate fully and succeed in education, the arts and athletics. The commitment and leadership of School Committee members is vital to achieving that goal.

It is the role of the School Committee to work with community leaders to ensure that the school district maintains its successes in the classroom and provides the opportunity for students to become active and successful in an ever-changing society, and for the school to maintain its distinct and integral role in the success of the South County community. The School Committee should work with the school administration to provide the faculty and students with the supportive leadership and resources necessary to help students become productive members of our society.

Sheffield: 4 seats, 6 candidates

Andy Fetterhoff

Andy Fetterhoff was born in rural Pennsylvania in 1975 to working class parents and educated in the regional public schools. He excelled academically and in grade 7 was named to the Johns Hopkins University program for Academically Talented Youth. He took community college classes throughout high school, even as he partnered in a successful photography business.

Fetterhoff moved to New York City in 1993 to pursue technical interests in the music field. Years later he left the city and through the influence of a close friend landed in the Berkshires. A resident since 2000, he wants to start a family and has hopes of offering his experience, energy, and viewpoint to nurturing community. As an accomplished woodworker and an IT specialist, he has an understanding of both ideals and complexity.

My vision is for a school committee that represents the interest of quality education first. A regional district offers challenges, from financing to the interests of students of diverse backgrounds, each with different interests and goals.

It is my hope that the elected representatives will listen to their constituents and bring to the table new ideas. I intend to make the district more financially accountable and to assure that the education it provides increasingly suits the needs of current and future student bodies. We will do well to keep in mind that every decision of the school committee impacts not only students and their education, but also parents, taxpayers, and, most importantly, the future of our community.

Catherine Miller

Involved for over 30 years in civic and community activities, Miller's current responsibilities include serving as a board member of the Community Health Programs; a board member and development chair of the Berkshire Choral Festival; a board member and chair of the Compensation Committee of Berkshire Bank and Berkshire Bankcorp; Junior Warden, chair of the Property Committee and member of the Finance and Audit Committee of Christ Church/Trinity Lutheran Church; member of the ad hoc committee to beautify the Town of Sheffield's parking lot; and a member of the Glory Be Clown Troupe.

Past activities have included serving as first vice-chair of the board of the American National Red Cross, chair of

>

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the Massachusetts State Council of the Red Cross, and chair of the Berkshire County Chapter of the Red Cross. She is founder of the Eagle Fund, an endowment for educational enrichment programs for the SBRSD, and has served on the boards of the Barrington Stage Company and Berkshire United Way and as a board member and past president and treasurer and investment manager of the Sheffield Historical Society. She also was a member of the SBRSD's school committee from 2005–2007.

Miller also has served on the Planning Board, Council on Aging, the Building Committee, and the Economic Development Task Force for the town of Sheffield.

Miller was a college administrator and teacher of psychology at the State University of New York at Albany and Simon's Rock College. Following that she became a partner at Wheeler & Taylor, Inc., where she established the Sheffield office and served as vice-president. She has resided in Sheffield for 36 years with her husband, James.

Providing a solid elementary and secondary education for our young people and helping them to realize their potential, to become creative thinkers, problem solvers, and leaders in their own right, is one of the responsibilities of our greater community.

Our young people need to be educated for occupations and world conditions that we cannot imagine. We all share in this responsibility, which requires an educational program involving parents and highly qualified, motivated teachers who reflect local values. This should be a focus of the School Committee, noble objectives that must be achieved with fiscal responsibility.

Our small district faces many challenges, but at the same time our size offers opportunities that are not available in a larger system. We must ensure that our students receive a solid education that includes opportunities beyond the classroom, designed to meet unknown challenges.

Today's students are tomorrow's leaders and craftsmen, carpenters, electricians, businesspersons, teachers, doctors, engineers, and contractors, both in our towns and beyond. We need to work to ensure they are prepared for challenge.

John (Jack) Pollitt

Pollitt was born In Fall River, MA, in 1950. He graduated from Hand High in 1968 and attended Middlesex Community College from 1968 to 1970. He married in 1971 and has one son, Michael. He has lived in Sheffield for 20 years.

Pollitt works as a business consultant for Goodyear Tire and Rubber and has served as district manager for Penske Auto Centers and district manager for Monro Muffler Brake. In his spare time, he enjoys golf and has a Sports Car Club of America competition license. He has a private pilot's license and has coached Pee Wee, Little League, and Babe Ruth Baseball.

He has served for eight years on the SBRSD School Committee, where he has been chair and vice-chair of the Finance Committee, chair of the Collective Bargaining Committee, member of the Warrant Committee, and chair of the Superintendent Search Committee.

The years I have served on the School Committee have been some of the most personally fulfilling in my life. In a small way, along with other dedicated people, I feel we have worked to help make this district one of the best in the state. Southern Berkshire is blessed with some of the finest, most dedicated teachers and administrators in the commonwealth. Southern Berkshire is a top-performing organization striving to become the best in the state. The elements are in place. We just need to support and trust our professionals to get the job done.

School Committee members hold a position of trust and great responsibility in the community. We need to insure that our students are prepared to move to the next phase of their lives, be it higher education or entering into the workforce. Committee members must demonstrate the wisdom to know when to not interfere with the operation of the school and the courage

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to speak up, even if you are a lone voice, when something is not working. Committee members must allow the professionals to do their jobs but never be afraid to question their methods.

Our system is a good system. I am proud of the teacher's administrators and committee members past and present that have made this a district to be proud of. With everyone pulling together we can move to the next level. I ask for your vote so I may continue to help in this journey.

Scott Sanes

Sanes is a 10-year resident of Sheffield with a daughter in the sixth grade at Undermountain Elementary School and a special needs son attending the Mt. Everett High School Life Skills Program. He received his Juris Doctor degree in 1982 and has had a trial law practice for 26 years.

Sanes served for five years as a member of the board of directors at the Option Institute and Fellowship in Sheffield and for three years as a school council member at Undermountain Elementary. He is currently a board member of the Eagle Fund.

I chose to run because I felt that the students needed a strong advocate who would prioritize educational opportunities over other town considerations. We have incredibly talented teachers and the facilities available to make the Southern Berkshires a shining example of public education throughout the Commonwealth. I am passionately committed to making certain that the Southern Berkshire Regional School District has the support and resources necessary so that our children can realize their academic potentials. As a trial attorney with 26 years of advocate experience, I wanted to volunteer my time and efforts to improving the education in our community. There is nothing more important to me than the health and education of my children and nothing should be considered of greater value to the towns that make up SBRSD.

H. Dennis Sears

Sears has been a resident of Sheffield for over nine years. He resides on Boardman St. and is married to Rene Wood. He and Rene started visiting Sheffield in 1985 as weekend visitors from Connecticut, then became seasonal renters and second-home owners. He has three children, who live in Hawaii, Illinois, and Alabama. His children were all educated in public schools, which gave him the opportunity to be a PTA parent. One son and a daughter have taught in public schools. He also has six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Sears comes from a long line of farmers and craftsmen and is the first in that line who didn't make his living from the land at some point during his life. After graduating with a degree in mathematics and physics, he joined IBM and started a career in sales and marketing that lasted over 31 years. After retirement, he started his own company providing sales management and customer relations management consulting to small technology companies. After retiring a second time, he joined an outsourcing company and later an Internet startup. After final retirement a few years ago, he put his financial, management, analyzing, problem solving, negotiation and communication skills to work in support of the community.

Sears is co-treasurer of Christ Episcopal Trinity Lutheran Church, former treasurer of the Sheffield Historical Society, member of the Sheffield Land Trust, and proud to be a community organizer and activist. The loves of his life beyond Rene and their families and friends are biking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, reading, learning, and living in the Berkshires and Sheffield. >

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The vision I had when I became involved in changing the selection of Southern Berkshire Regional School District School Committee members from appointive to elective has not changed. My vision was and is to make the School Committee a truly district-wide body that thinks and acts in the interest of students of the entire district; and that our five towns would come together as a united body to provide the desired educational opportunity to our children.

My vision of what I want to do as a member of the School Committee will change as I learn more about how SBRSD, other districts, the Massachusetts Department of Education, and the Commonwealth all orbit around one another. While I have attended many of the School Committee meetings since I became involved in changing how we select the committee members, it will take some time as an actual member to firm up my 'vision.' I know my expanded vision will include balancing educational funding needs with town budgets, retaining district students, attracting out-of-district students and communicating with all residents in the district.

Vito Valentini

Valentini is a fulltime Sheffield resident and homeowner. He lives with his wife of 17 years, Christine, and their two children. Alexander is 11 years old and is in sixth grade at Undermountain Elementary. Julianna is 3 and will enter pre-K next year.

Originally from New York City, where he was a middle school math teacher for the New York public school system for approximately 30 years, he has had a long connection with the Berkshires. He was first a weekender with property in Egremont and then Great Barrington, before settling fulltime in Sheffield 13 years ago.

Over the past few years, Valentini has had a close association with area schools. He was a member of the elementary school council, sitting first as a representative from New Marlborough Central and then from Undermountain Elementary. During the last two years, he has been a volunteer tutor for advanced math students at Undermountain.

He currently serves as an appointed member of the Sheffield Parks and Recreation Committee.

He is an avid cyclist who enjoys riding on country roads and being reminded of the beauty that the Berkshires have to offer at every turn.

I am a parent with a deep and genuine commitment to the continued success of our schools.

As it is incumbent of me to approach this position with my full commitment, it is also incumbent of our townspeople to ask my views and agenda. To try to address this question I have listed below items that are important to me and that I would address as a community school committee member.

I will work to develop a spirit of cooperation and good feeling between the five member towns. I will work to promote and enhance the positive image of our schools in our communities. I will work to improve communication and agreement between the school committee and town governments. I will make maintaining educational excellence and positive educational innovation a top priority. I will encourage increased communication between the schools, parents, and community. I will work to maintain good communication, cooperation, and support between the school committee and the professional staff. I will promote sound fiscal management. Finally, I will be an enthusiastic advocate for our schools with a reasonable commonsense point of view.

I thank you for your consideration and eagerly look forward to our district having a school committee founded on a united commitment and good will that we can all be proud of.

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Sunday, 8:00 am–2:00 pm

Dignitaries Gather to Celebrate Hudson Conservation Project

On the clear blue Thursday afternoon of October 24th, Governor Deval Patrick, Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Ian Bowles, Department of Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Mary Griffin, Senator Ben Downing and many other dignitaries and local residents gathered by Steadman Pond in Monterey to celebrate Phase II of the Hudson Conservation Project, largely brought to fruition by the Hudsons with the help of the Monterey Preservation Land Trust, the Berkshire Natural Resources Council, and the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game. Together we all celebrated a remarkable conservation effort protecting an additional 73 Hudson acres, including Steadman Pond, on the west side of Tyringham Road, and also adding 61 Hudson acres to the MPLT's 324-acre Mt. Hunger property on the east side. These 458 acres are now consolidated under a state conservation restriction, and along with the 356 acres of Hudson property conserved in Phase I, constitute a remarkable, contiguous preserved habitat totaling over 800 acres.

"Preservation of this 800-acre-plus landscape would not have been possible without the foresight and generosity of our partners," Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Ian Bowles said. "The Commonwealth owes a debt of gratitude to the Hudson family for choosing to preserve this property rather than sell it to developers; to the Berkshire Natural Resources Council for helping to protect this significant parcel of pristine land; and to the Monterey Preservation Land Trust for its extraordinary donation of conservation restrictions worth $2 million."

The Hudson Conservation Project also puts two wonderful properties back on the tax rolls in Monterey, a win-win result for the town and for all Massachusetts hunters, hikers, and naturalists.

The board of directors of the Monterey Preservation Land Trust—Kenn Basler, Kathryn Roberts, Storrs Olds, Peter Vallianos, Laurily Epstein, Michael Storch, and Alan Salamon—are all very proud and grateful to Sarah and Barclay Hudson, to Tad Ames and his crew from the Berkshire Natural Resources Council, to Peter Milanesi and everyone else at the Department of Fish and Game who helped make this possible, and to everyone at the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, including David Cash, Assistant Secretary of Policy at EEA, whose parents have a house on Lake Garfield and who plays Sunday softball at Greene Park.

Many thanks also to Kenn Basler of the Monterey General Store, who provided the refreshments, and to the bald eagle that soared above us, gliding over the field as we honored the Hudson's contribution to preserving our greatest natural resource.

A large map of the Hudson Conservation Project is on display at the Monterey General Store. Please come by and share in our bounty.

— Jonathan Sylbert, President, MPLT

Marion Larson, Mass Wildlife

l to r: Department of Fish and Game Commissioner Mary Griffin, Monterey Preservation Land Trust President Jonathan Sylbert, Governor Deval Patrick, Berkshire Natural Resources Council President Tad Ames.

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Affordable Housing in Monterey

What will Monterey look like ten or twenty-five years from now? Will it be home only to the wealthy? Or can we insure that Monterey's population will be a positive blend of working class families, children of longtime residents, professionals and business people, retirees, and second-home owners?

We need a diverse population if we want to continue as a vibrant community. As Pastor Elizabeth Goodman noted after our last Town Meeting, there are more people being buried in our cemetery than are enrolling in our local school. Our town is devoted to our historic schoolhouse, and by an overwhelming majority voted to keep it in operation despite the painfully low enrollment. Surely that vote is an indication of support for a community that boasts not just the wealthy or elderly, but young families, too.

Housing costs have soared dramatically in the past few years. The average price of a three-bedroom house in Monterey now is around $365,000. Yet a middle-class family of four, with an annual household income of $59,200 cannot pay that price. If we want to have teachers, nurses, police officers, farmers, couples with young children, public employees, and other middle-class families live in Monterey, we need to increase the affordable housing stock.

To that end, on September 8 the Select Board appointed an Affordable Housing Committee to pursue such a goal. Appointed members include Marty Cherneff, Laurily Epstein, Scott Jenssen, Tim Lovett, Kathryn Roberts, Kyp Wasiuk, and Monica Webb. Elizabeth Goodman was the catalyst for the formation of this committee, and although she does not live in Monterey, she is a mainstay on this committee.

Our committee is anxious to talk to as many town residents as possible about affordable housing. We want our neighbors to understand who will be eligible for such housing, where it might be built, and the various methods we can use to finance such a project. The homes will be for sale, so that the potential buyers will be employed and able to pay off their mortgages. There will be covenants in the deeds that maintain the housing as affordable for many years to come.

We believe that Monterey should attract and maintain a diverse community. We hope that you feel likewise. We shall be presenting our ideas at the November 19th community dinner, and look forward to talking with you then.

— Laurily Epstein

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Monterey Library Notes

Congratulations to Beth Carpenter, Monterey's new Postmaster! Thank you to her and her staff for the beautiful framed Dr. Seuss commemorative stamp and the beautiful edition of *Your Favorite Seuss*. We're happy to see Beth here at the library every Thursday at 5 p.m., and after her gift and speech we know how much she appreciates us!

Moxie, our reading dog, will be back November 8 and available for 10:00 and 10:20 a.m. appointments. Moxie loves to listen to children read while she looks at the pictures, and even kids who aren't so sure of dogs wind up snuggling with her.

Finally, the Library Trustees and staff are aware of the needs of some of our neighbors in the present economy and would like to have the library accept non-perishable food items for the local Food Pantry in lieu of fines for the month of November. If you don't have it with you when you bring the books back. you'll have the month to have the fine waived with a donation of food.

— Mark Makuc, Library Director

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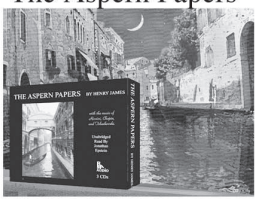
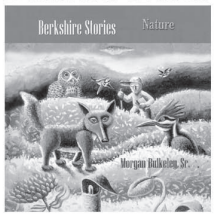
Audio for the Refined Ear

Berkshire Media Artists

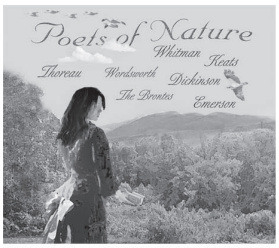
The Aspern Papers



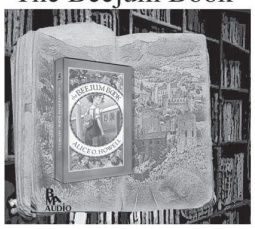
Berkshire Stories



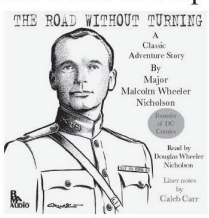
Poets of Nature



The Beejum Book



The Birth of Pulp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From the Town Clerk

The following is the text of a letter sent to the Select Board in response to their letter which is referenced in their unapproved minutes of October 27:

Thank you for your note of October 27, 2008. I understand there is some confusion about loading Bylaws to the Town Website and the idea that an **unofficial** version might be acceptable to contractors, architects, and builders as well as the taxpayers of Monterey. As I have remarked in the past, there would be no problem and no confusion, should it be that the Town Clerk directly uploads files to the website as is done in other towns.

By stating the intention to take over this responsibility of the Office of the Clerk, the Board should be fully aware that there have been and could in the future be occasions and happenings which are designed to reflect poorly on this Office. Town and Zoning Bylaws are exact and precise. They must not be compromised by third parties to the Town Meeting and the Town Clerk. It is neither good practice nor fiscally responsible.

I would suggest that the Select Board itself should contact Virtual Town Hall, as I have, to learn that the Town Clerk can be allowed to send them an email with files in html, broken out according to sections. From what their representatives have informed me at Clerk Conferences and in the practice of other Town Clerks, this mode of approach will be quite acceptable. It will not leave any confusion as to the validity of the content.

Respectfully yours,

Barbara B. Swann
Certified Mass. Municipal Clerk
Master International Institute Clerk

Affordable Housing Topic of Nov. 19 Community Potluck

The first Monterey Potluck of the season was host to the marvelous photographer/adventurer Dudley Levenson from Lenox, who regaled us with stories, history, and pictures from northwest Pakistan, Hunzaland, and a surprise destination off the coast of Thailand. We are very grateful to him for a fascinating evening.

For the next potluck on Wednesday, November 19, we have the recently formed Monterey Affordable Housing Committee (see article on p. 14). The committee is anxious to present its findings and get input from the community.

The November Monterey Potluck Dinner will be held at the Monterey Meetinghouse at 6 p.m. on November 19. All are welcome. Please bring a dish to share and a place setting and silverware for yourself. See you there!

— Kyle Pierce

Ice Rink Needs Volunteers

Volunteers are needed to help set up the Monterey ice skating rink on Saturday, November 29, at 10 a.m. The rink is in the pavilion behind the Monterey fire station.

— Steve Graves

Fair Trade Holiday Sale at Gould Farm Nov. 28, 29

On the traditional shopping weekend after Thanksgiving, Gould Farm will be offering a non-traditional way to shop while giving back to others. On November 28 and 29, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m, the Farm will be hosting a SERRV sale in the new post-and-beam Harvest Barn (home of the newly opened Café with its offerings of exquisite baked goods and coffees). SERRV is a nonprofit, fair trade organization that gives back every penny to its artisans. You can see the range of wonderful handcrafted items available at www.serrv.org. Much of this selection will be displayed at the Harvest Barn. For directions to the Farm and for more information on our work, go to www.gouldfarm.org.

Disability Law Informational Meeting Nov. 23

Nancy Svirida, a staff attorney with the Massachusetts Disability Law Center, will present a program about the center's services on Sunday, November 23, at 3 p.m. at the Monterey Meetinghouse. The public is invited. Gould Farm is sponsoring the event to help educate people about disability laws.

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The Walk

"Go on as far as you want.
You can catch up with me later,"
You said.

I kept walking
Even a little more briskly
After you turned back.

I didn't like going on without you;
I wouldn't like not going on
All the way to the T of Gould Road crowning Curtiss
Making it a mile.

My feet, calves, knees, hamstrings, and hips
Kept moving
Arms too, swinging a bit
Even swaggering and tripping along alone
Downhill
Passing cows at rest on the snow.

My face felt fine in the cold, still air.
I pictured my eyes looking very blue
Between my dark blue hat,
Light blue turtleneck and
Red, red cheeks.

My cheeks and the barns the only color
In the black and white after the snow.

At Curtiss I circled back
Back around I went
Up up up keeping my pace
Eyes to the ground so as not to see
How far I had to climb
Breathe in through the nose,
Out through the mouth Deep deep deeply
Down into the diaphragm
A full breath near the top.

And there you were
Shouting from the lookout hill,
"I watched you all the way.
I didn't know I'd see you from here.
Boy were you fast.
I saw you turn. Fast.
And all the way up the hill – fast.

Yay! My heart felt.
He's here. He was watching me.
He just took a rest.

— Elizabeth Silk

Four Haiku

Tangible Words

Earth speaks tangible words
we learn by touching her wisdom
children know this.

Generosity

Learn from the Sun how to give
it neither counts its rays
nor takes them back.

Paradox of the Sun

The Sun can never know dark
it brings its own light
wherever it shines.

The Wolf

Pet the wolf at the door
he wouldn't be there
but for his own hunger.

— A. O. Howell

Omen

I was lying on the hammock
By the pond ...
And began thinking I would write

A new book . .. called
Swallowing Rivers ...

Which inspired me to rise,
To lift myself from the rest of noon
And walk towards this new

Endeavor.

Half way between there and here,
I stumbled upon a garter snake,

Slithering through the grasses
And lilies ...

I wonder ... might the fact that I crossed
The path of the garter bode

Well ...

Or ... was it ... a curse ...

— Mark Murray

Forest

Walking through the forest cool and quiet
The light comes through and dimples the leaves
Trees bend low, and then up in a joyful tease
I am in the forest and the forest is in me.

Walking through the forest full of life
Hearing the blue jays scolding me
Seeing the flowers exclaiming they are free
I am in the forest and the forest is in me.

Walking through the forest calm and still
Watching the stream winding up and down
Seeing the moss covering the trees like a wedding gown
I am in the forest and the forest is in me.

Walking through the forest gentle and dark
Watching the bees get honey from their comb
Gazing upon the muskrat, the burrow is their home
I am in the forest and the forest is in me.

— Judah Piepho

Just a Thought ...

The issue on the public boat access on Lake Garfield has been on going for some time now with no concrete solution to solve the problem. Having no background in engineering, designing, state laws, jurisdiction, conservation, budget, etc., etc., etc., I can only offer "just a thought." If it helps great, if not, oh well, just took my time typing it up. Perhaps this "thought" may have already been brought up, discussed, researched, and determined to be not the answer to solve this issue, but I have not read or heard any talk of it. As a boater for many years now, I have puddle-jumped (that's boaters' slang for traveling to different bodies of water and launching whatever you have) at public and private boat access ramps, and feel that I can say with some confidence that my "thought" has been done before, and has worked for other bodies of water that faced the same issue as Lake Garfield.

So here it is: "Just a thought—work with what you've got!" The boat ramp stays where it is; it's already there, so why move it, just needs some adjustments to separate it from the town beach, making a defined barrier between the two. How you may wonder? By erecting a strong solid barrier (fence) along the land portion to keep beachgoers away from backing vehicles in tow. Extend that defined barrier into the lake with a jetty, with the barrier continuing along the top of jetty to keep swimmers away from any boating traffic coming or going from the lake. The jetty can be made by piling rocks in a wall-like formation, or a concrete wall, both reinforced to withstand the forces of Mother Nature at her worse (this is where a structural expert would be needed). At the same time of building this structure into the lake (after drawdown would be the time to do it) regrade and resurface the ramp to update it. Along the other side of the wall (beach side), put some sort of safety net to keep curious swimmers from trying to scale the wall/fence barrier. This all could be done for a fraction of the cost of buying some water frontage (not cheap) and building a new access ramp with parking spaces.

Oh, did I forget to mention the parking thought? "Just a thought—work with what you've got!" Not sure about this, but the piece of land on the other side of Sylvan Rd just as you turn onto it, (where everyone parks when all spaces in front of beach are full, and for the annual LakeFest) could be the parking area for the vehicles using the boat ramp, and I think there would even be extra spaces for the beachgoers there too. Doesn't have to be fancy, just designed to have entry on Sylvan Road and exit onto Tyringham Road, using cost effective materials for drainage and surface (this is where a design expert would be needed). If that land is not town-owned, then how about using the land where the original town beach was going to be, on the other side of the road by Brewer Pond. Either way it's just using what we've already got, and with very minimal costs to the town compared with some of the other ideas that have been looked at recently.

Making the boat access ramp, with parking area, useable all during the boating season into a workable plan needs to be done, and perhaps by putting my "thought" in writing other "Just a Thoughts" may come forward. Questions will be asked, and need to be addressed; even I have questions about all this:

1. Do we charge for launching at this lake? (How much and does the town collect or state?)

2. Do residents of Monterey obtain a sticker for the season to launch? (One-time season fee for use, or pay for each time?)

3. Could the money collected go into a "Maintaining ramp and parking area" account (No tax burden on town)?

Who maintains the ramp and parking area? (Which town board takes on the job?)

Liability falls on town or state for mishaps? (Does this require more insurance coverage from town and at what cost?)

These are just some questions that come to mind as I'm typing. This "Just a Thought" is a start or end, depending on how it is received by you, the readers. It will add to the boat population during the summer months, but by a small number when compared to other bodies of water that become floating parking lots and a dangerous ones at that. With a few more boats cruising around, safety guidelines will have to be posted and followed by all who enjoy Lake Garfield.

Just a Thought ...

— Robert Johnson

New staff housing at Gould Farm was recently shown to the wider community at a dedication ceremony. Here Neil Elinoff is shown in front of the Mann House. (Photo by Edie Ross.)

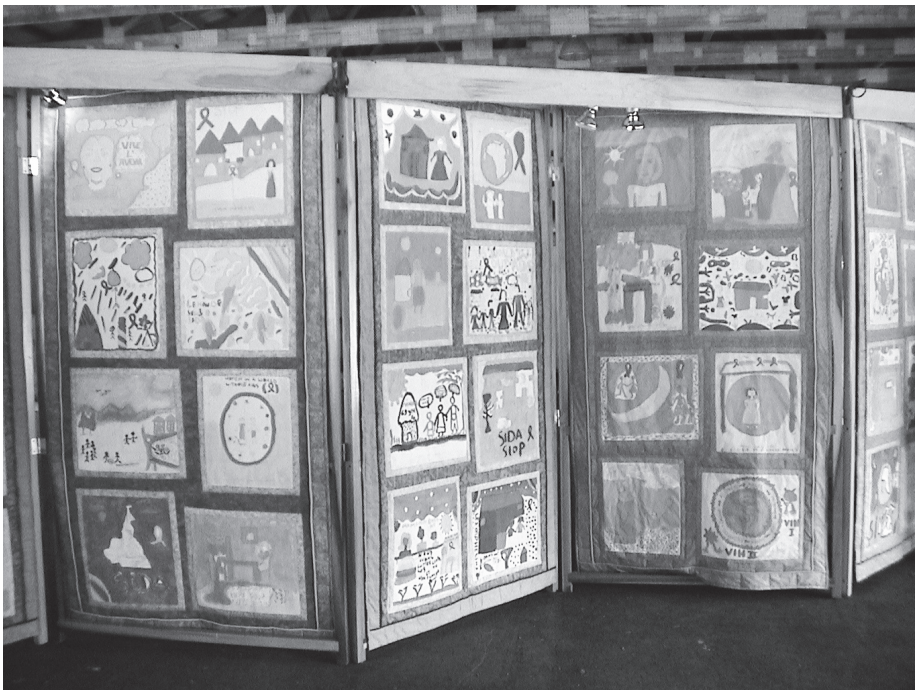
Amid Images of the Ocean, Vikki True Sings of Rivers

Vikki True and friends, along with Mary Kate Jordan and other fiber artists, invite you to a combined concert and fiber arts show/sale on Saturday, November 15, at 2:30 p.m. in the sanctuary of the Monterey Meetinghouse. Other Monterey fiber artists whose work will be on display include Pam Johnson, Sue Cain, and Marcia Doelman.

Two nonprofit agencies will benefit from the proceeds of this "mixed media" event. Claiming Our Voices, founded by Mary Campbell Case and based here in Berkshire County, provides education and mentorship support to pre-adolescent and young teenage women. FINCA creates opportunities for change by providing microgrants to Third World women. You can explore their mission statements online at ClaimingOurVoices.org and FINCA.org.

The suggested donation is $15 for reserved tickets, $18 at the door; for those under 12, or 65+, $12. If you buy a sandwich or other goodies at the General Store on November 15, you may reduce your donation by a dollar or two. Just mention that you shopped at the store that day.

Mary Kate says about the water theme,"When we looked at a map to trace the flow of Earth's water, we found countless rivers and a minimum of seven seas. But when we look at the flow of real water, we discover something else. From the Konkapot to the Volga, each river flows eventually to the sea, and all that water seems to gather in only one ocean. In the same way, we're all unique individuals but, since there's only one human race, what touches each of us has an effect on us all."



Monterey Meets Africa:
Reception for Dr. Ruth Engo

What a spirited event it was when the "World Without AIDS Quilt" (above) was unveiled at the August 31st event at the firehouse pavilion; and what an inspiring talk Dr. Ruth Engo, President of African Action on AIDS, and former United Nations Senior Economic Affairs Officer for Africa, gave at a community supper last November. Since then, Ruth has been back in Africa, working diligently to support children affected by AIDS through health education, providing bed nets and "Sur' Eau" (to purify water), funding orphan girls for secondary school, and helping women generate income to pay for their health care needs. Ruth makes one trip to the United States every fall, and this year she will return to Monterey so that we can present the quilt to her directly and continue our dialogue about developing a Sister Cities/Villages program between Monterey and a village in Cameroon, Africa. This means that we will all have another opportunity to meet Ruth and to see the quilt.

Everyone is invited to a reception for Dr. Ruth Engo and to view the "Vision of a World Without AIDS Quilt" on Saturday, November 22 from 2:00 until 4:00 p.m. in the Monterey Meetinghouse social room. The reception will begin at 2:00 when Ruth will be brought into the social room where she will see the quilt for the first time. Come meet Dr. Ruth Engo, check out the quilt, see photos of the children who painted the pictures for the quilt, get information on African Action on AIDS and what Monterey residents are doing in collaboration with Dr. Engo, learn about Sister Cities International, consider some Holiday Gift Options, and have some good food and lively conversation.

We would love to see you anytime between 2:00 and 4:00, but if you want to see the presentation of the quilt to Dr. Engo, please arrive at 2:00 or a little before. If you have questions or you would like to participate in any way, contact Kathie Frome, 528-2516.

To reserve your tickets or if you have any questions about the event, call Mary Kate at 413-528-5557.

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Letter from College

Labels, Voting, and Values

Within the next few days, most of you will be participating in our democratic system as votes are placed for local and state officials and for the President of the United States. I struggled to decide what to write about this month because there are so many aspects of elections: the candidates, the actual election, the issues, the campaign insanity, aspects of presidential power, and of course democracy. This year I am fortunate enough to be taking two classes that cover several of these topics, so for the next few months I am going to connect some of what I have learned and talked about in the classroom to an election series. I will start with democracy, move on to an election assessment in December, and finally, for January, look at the topic of presidential power to fit with the inauguration.

At the risk of sounding overly academic, I am going to base this column of musings on ideas in a book that I highly recommend as an engaging read. In *Future of Freedom,* Fareed Zakaria considers the history and evolution of democracies, and their values. He makes distinctions and clarifies definitions of various systems, and after reading the first few chapters, I started to wonder what Americans would actually say that they value most.

Do we value democracy, or do we value liberty? Can we value both equally? It is a sad fact that in this democratic country—though this election may contradict such statistics—usually only a little over half of the people vote in general elections. Zakaria points out that when we in the West think of "democracy," we equate it to what is considered to be liberal democracy: "a political system marked not only by free and fair elections but also by the rule of law, a separation of powers, and the protection of basic liberties of speech, assembly, religion and property" (p. 17). The bottom line is how we conceptualize democracy itself, compared to what we value in principle.

When I think of democracy, the above description sounds about right. Zakaria suggests that this type of political system is a liberal democracy reflecting what he terms "constitutional liberalism," or the value of individual rights, and argues that it "has nothing intrinsically to do with democracy" (p. 17). Simply being called a democracy, or fulfilling the minimum requirements of democracy, does not also guarantee constitutional liberalism. There are many countries that are democratic on some levels, but fall short of being liberal democracies. Zakaria suggests that democracy is doing well, whereas liberty is not (p. 17). For all our foreign policy promotion of democracy as a superpower, maybe it is worth asking what we really value as Americans and what we understand to comprise the system of governance we seek to export.

The point I am trying to get at is that due to the variation in what we consider to be democratic, it is useful to identify what values we hold dear. In a truly democratic country, or in a liberal democracy, we end up being less concerned with how leaders are selected than how they govern. We care about government's goals, and that is what constitutional liberalism is all about; it refers to the Western tradition of emphasizing individual liberty and the rule of law. Therefore, perhaps we could ask: If we elect one candidate and if a certain party has a monopoly over the institutions, what will the government do then, and will the checks and balances function as designed to preserve our constitutional liberalism?

One justification for the invasion of Iraq was to spread democracy in the Middle East. How does our understanding of democracy impact our impression of victory in Iraq? Should we wait until Iraq is a model liberal democracy before we declare victory, or are elections really enough? We would never settle for elections here to be enough to classify us as a democracy, but the building of constitutional liberalism does not happen overnight. In fact we have a liberal tradition behind us as a nation that provided us with our values, but what about those regions of the world that do not have this history? Free elections in Iraq will not ensure that liberal democracy will take hold, and consolidate itself within society. Some argue that ultimately democracy is a universal value. I am not entirely convinced.

I sent in my absentee ballot a few days ago, and I found myself thinking about these various elements. What was I voting for? Although I am all for democracy, I value liberty and individual rights far above our official label of being a democracy. We are a republic in the tradition of Rome, which, Zakaria reminds us, first gave rise to the concept of a limited government (p. 32). So I sealed and mailed my envelope with my John Hancock on the front, and I hope that no matter who wins the presidency on November 4 our true values hold any greater forces at bay, and our rights and entitlement to liberty, as individuals, remain intact.

— Tarsi Dunlop

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Smile of the Great Spirit

The progression of autumn across our land seems to come from the north, foreshadowing the approach of winter. In that general direction more than three hundred miles away is a lake called Winnipesaukee in the center of New Hampshire, where we spend a vacation week every summer. In the ancient language of the Abenaki indigenous people, the name of the lake means "Smile Of The Great Spirit." Where the southern end of the lake drains into the headwaters of the Merrimack River, the crude construction of channels where the Abanakis placed their weirs to catch spawning fish every spring and fall are visible to this very day. At this time of year the high cheekbones of the mountains there are streaked with the deciduous war paint of Indian summer

Indian summer will soon reach the Berkshires; it comes usually after the first killing frost, which happened in Monterey on October 19, just as the Konkapot River began to draw down Lake Garfield. It comes and goes elusively when the daily temperature reaches about 70 degrees for the better part of a week, followed by a period of cold rainy weather. The term "Indian summer" has been used in America for more than two hundred years and is so named for the traditional period when native peoples would harvest their crops and store up supplies of fish and game.

Recently at the Bidwell House Museum, the colonial and agricultural historical heritage was ceremoniously celebrated with events closing the season. The second annual Pumpkin Fest for children of all ages was well attended and appreciated at the site of the vegetable garden, where the door of the Indian wigwam built by the late David McAllester looked out with a spirit of his congenial approval. A week later the museum hosted bestselling author George Robert Minkoff reading and signing his latest book, *Dragons Of The Storm,* about the history of Native American tobacco from the Jamestown settlement, which soon took the rest of the civilized world by storm. Tobacco was probably a cash crop for Adonijah Bidwell as well.

If you are like me, now is the time to enjoy walking down the country lanes of Indian summer, where among the rustle of fallen leaves the forest floor holds a cornucopia of nuts, berries, and mushrooms while just above still clinging to almost bare limbs are grapes, crabapples, and more berries. Somewhere not far away, the black bears are busy day and night eating everything in sight to fatten up for their winter hibernation just around the comer. Until then the furtive days of Indian summer shining brightly for a brief interlude might be said to be "The Smile of the Great Spirit."

— George B. Emmons

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The Joys of Rutabagas

These are very fresh rutabaga statistics: she weighs 6.5 pounds, stands 4 feet overall, has 36-inch greens (11 leaves, so that would be 396 inches or 33 running feet), and a shapely 3-inch neck. Her body is two-tone, purple above with some texture and then ivory below with three attractive dimples. Her taproot is 4 inches but I know we left some in the ground, and she is 7 inches diameter at her girth and 5 inches on her vertical axis.

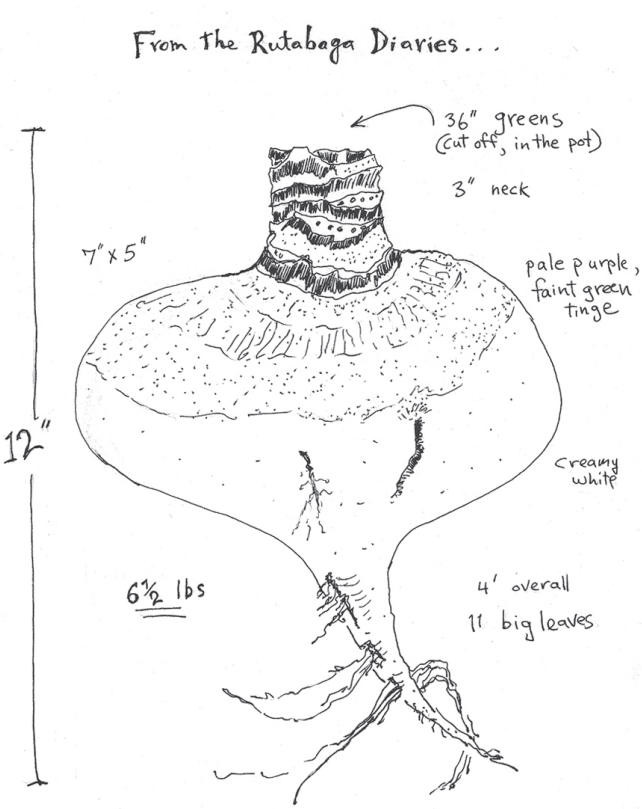
As Wall St. comes to pieces and the election turns nasty, I take stock in my own row: even having had several good meals, a great deal of kitchen science, and some giving away to those less fortunate, we've got 45 rutabagas still in the garden looking like security. The one I brought down just now for statistical analysis is an average model. At 6.5 lbs apiece we have 292.5 lbs of breakfast, lunch, dinner, and Xmas gifts still in the bank. That is pretty good for two 21-foot rows.

A rutabaga is like a turnip, though sweeter, milder, and a creamier yellow on the inside. You can eat them raw: sliced, diced, chopped, or grated—or bitten into whole-hog. You can roast, boil, steam, stir-fry, mash, or stew a rutabaga. My recent experiments show good results also in the pickling department. Just cut into slim sticks and pack raw with some garlic, dill, and a 3:2 solution of water to cider vinegar. No salt, no sugar—let the rutabaga shine.

I do have a new pressure canner and all the storage vegetables have lined up for trials there. I have to admit a canned bean is a canned bean and really everything I've tried is helped by a little salt and garlic, including the wonderful rutabaga. Myself, I eat the canned vegetables happily knowing they don't require any coal or uranium to keep them once they are out of the canner. But the rutabaga was born for the root cellar.

She was born, apparently of a wild cabbage and a turnip parent, and got her name from the Old English or maybe the Romans. The Scots call her "tumshie" or "neep" ("turnip" also is derived from "neep") and like to serve her on the same plate with potatoes, mashed, as "tatties and neeps." Put together they become "clapshot" and can be dolled up with parsley, butter, salt and pepper, and even some onion.

Some folks, enchanted by the rutabaga, have formed the Advanced Rutabaga Studies Institute in Forest Grove, Oregon. A quick cybertrip there tells me the staff and directors of ARSI are not only scientific, but creative and humorous as well. Links from their place took me to an annual sporting event in Ithaca, New York, called the International Rutabaga Curling Championship, which takes place in December at the end of the farmer's market season when folks will do anything to keep warm, even pitch innocent rutabagas down a boardwalk. (If they run out of rutabagas, they will pitch frozen chickens and still call it Rutabaga Curling.)



I also discovered a musical group called The Wyldmen, who play the Rutabaga Blues on their CD "Veggie Music" and carve their instruments from vegetables, on stage. They particularly feature the slide-potato, and if you care you can go to their site and see the video of their rendition of "Danny Boy" on this instrument.

These are current inspirations, sparked by the rutabaga. But she has been around a long time and is even the original jack-o-lantern, also called tumshie lantern in Scotland. Hollowed (not hallowed) rutabagas containing a candle were carried about as an ancient symbol of a damned soul by pagan celebrators of the early precursor of Hallowe'en.

This is all good fun and nutrition so far. But my research has taken me too far. I find the rutabaga is about to be manipulated and restructured for energy speculation and profit. She is the next subject in the rash of genetic engineering projects looking for oil. Currently she has a healthy 0.6 grams of fat per 100 grams of rutabaga. Now the bioengineers, with funding from the Department of Energy, the National Science Foundation, and other non-food outfits are inserting a gene in her perfectly good, honest array which will cause her lipids to move around and pile up in her root, giving her the consistency of an avocado instead of her own clean crisp feel (with oils naturally found mainly in her seeds). At Michigan State University the Office of Biobased Technologies has figured out how to put a defective protein into her cell, a trigalactosyldiacylglycerol 4 protein to be exact, which will turn her into a serious oil well, another good food gone downhill into biofuels.

I'll guard my girls well, all 300 lbs of them. No trigalactic whatsits for them if I can help it. If Monsanto comes sniffing around here with white lab coats and pipettes, I will defend the natural genetic makeup of my personal edible portfolio and pal. Those early Scots and pagans had the right idea, and the curlers and musicians, too. Grow rutabagas for music and games, for lunch and dinner, even for lanterns. Look somewhere else for energy—look to the same place the rutabaga looks with her 33 feet of green leaves: the sun.

— Bonner J. McAllester

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New Film by Jason Brown

Monterey-based audiobook publisher Jason Brown has been seen lately about the Berkshires not recording Shakespeare and Company and Berkshire Theatre Festival actors, as he usually does, but filming them. His audiobook company Berkshire Media Artists, operated with his wife Nicky Wheeler-Nicholson Brown, has been publishing classical, psychological, and spiritual audiobooks since 1998. Here he describes his venture into filmmaking.

Filming the last shot of Taken *with Jason Brown, Rick Sands, John Hadden, Julie Webster and Gerry Lehane.*

I see this project as a cross pollination of audiobooks and film. Audio has the richer content and film has the visuals. After walking out of the video store empty-handed numerous times and going through my Netfilx list, I thought, why not make a film that I would like to see? Perhaps others will too.

I have been attempting to include the beautiful natural life of the Berkshires in our projects as we did with *Berkshire Stories* and *Poets of Nature,* but nothing really beats looking at nature itself. To combine the words and ideas of the great writers with scenic visuals, I launched Amorousfilms, "amorous" being a favorite word of Keats, whose poetry is very present in the film I wound up making. Amorousfilms is lucky to incorporate actors from our wonderful Berkshire theater companies as well as top cinematograghic talent lured from Hollywood in the days when we had film studios in the Berkshires. It seemed the natural thing to do.

The film is about a bestselling psychologist whose new client turns out to be a mystical enchantress with a literary inclination. His life is turned upside down. She is Nature, of course, on a quest to communicate with humanity: Nature reaching out to people as she always does, but this time more literally. It's also about connecting with our environment. The Romantic poets did this and they were our first psychologists.

On another level it's about the best the Berkshires has to offer. The idea for the film came from Christopher Bamford's book *Green Hermeticism,* published by Lindisfarne Books in Great Barrington; with a wealth of film production and acting talent nearby I thought a dynamic and innovative project was at hand—entirely Berkshire based. I would also like to think the film is about raising the level of consciousness. I hope young people will see it and be inspired to read the great writers and see the world in a new way.

To make the film, our crew of fifteen invaded several kind peoples' houses and grounds. Richard Sands, our brilliant director of photography, and the talented director/actor John Hadden went around for four days scouting locations, including the Berkshire Botanical Gardens. The enchantress, played by Shakespeare and Company's Julie Webster, entrances with poetry, including Anne Bronte's "The Arbor," so we had to find an arbor, along with an elfin grot from Keats' "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" and a river from Yeats's "Stolen Child," among other things. It wasn't easy. We filmed in Mt. Washington, Great Barrington, New Marlborough, and Monterey. The Berkshires had it all. At one point we had a convoy of fourteen cars and trucks driving though Monterey center. I was worried for a bit as well as excited, a new Monterey experience for me, but it went off without a hitch.

Taken is the working title. The psychologist is taken, as the knight is in Keats' "La Belle Dame" poem, to another realm. He is also taken by the beauty of nature, but in a profound way as Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, and Goethe were. We hope to be a part of the Berkshire International Film Festival screening at The Triplex in Great Barrington soon so the Berkshire public can see it. In the meantime we will have other screenings.

Who actually wrote the screenplay is a good question. I think I did, but it doesn't feel like it since it came about so spontaneously. What moved me the most was the vision the director, actors, and cinematographer had for the script. They made it their own.

More projects and scripts are in development, but right now film festivals are my main concentration. I envision this film and the others to come as being part of a new generation of filmmaking that focuses on joining the environment with great works of art and literature to produce media that transforms for the benefit of humanity. What better place to start than Monterey?

— Jason Brown

For a preview of the film go to www.amorousfilms.net.

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From the Meetinghouse . . .

The Lord, [having appeared to Abraham], said to him, "I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son." And Sarah [who] was listening at the tent entrance behind him … laughed to herself, saying, "After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?" The Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too wonderful for the Lord?" … But Sarah denied, saying, "I did not laugh"; for she was afraid. He said, "Oh yes, you did laugh."

— Genesis 18 excerpted

We have no reason to think Sarah was wrong to laugh. The fact that Sarah herself seems to think she was wrong to laugh shouldn't lead *us* to think she was. But, you know, maybe she didn't think she was wrong to laugh, either. The story tells us she was afraid, but maybe her fear wasn't about feeling guilty; maybe it was about feeling self-conscious and exposed following this moment of losing herself, given over to laughter. Hasn't this ever happened to you? You have a private moment with yourself—you talk to yourself, you revisit or replay a memory—and then you come back to your "right" mind and realize someone is watching you. "What are you doing?" comes the question and you say, "Nothing." "Were you talking to yourself?" "No," you say, though you were.

I have a picture of myself lost to laughter. I am in an eight-person shell on a river, having just crossed the finish line three seconds ahead of our closest rival. We were the junior varsity crew and no one expected much of us. The fact that we kept winning, race after race, confounded the varsity rowers in whose wake we were supposed to struggle though content. Our team was younger—not seniors being recruited for college rowing but freshman and sophomores fresh off the training barge. Our boat was heavier—not a sleek Vespoli but a wood-trimmed Schoenbroad; and our oars were hostile—not rubber-handled but wood just slitted so they wouldn't slip in our soft, then raw, then blooded, and finally calloused hands. We weren't nearly serious enough—so-called the Smiley Boat, we all laughed way too much to be doing the blistering work of crew. But there we were again, first across the finish line. My father, standing on the dock, snapped a series of pictures—the eight hard faces, all mid-grunt, in the final sprint; then the two boats' bows as they crossed the finish line (oh, that four-inch difference!); and at last our boat adrift on the far side of the finish line, oars afloat on the river's surface—two rowers leaning forward, laughing faces on bent knees, to catch a breath; a few turned in their seats, also laughing, to pass the water bottle down the line; and me with my head thrown back, laughing out loud.

It was a funny place to find me—on a successful sports team. Hopelessly bad at almost everything athletic, I was very good at crew because I am at least strong, and, unlike in most other sports, the only grace you need for crew is in rhythmic repetition. What's more, the rhythm is set by someone else—the coxswain who is, though always rather small, still quite scary, and armed with a microphone as well as (if I remember correctly) a whip. And in this way, too, it was a funny place to find me—on a crew, which has very few aspects to commend it. The only appeal it holds, to hear most people speak of it, is that it's very good exercise, but in the same sort of way that eating tree bark is a good way to get fiber into your diet or that a coma is a good way to relax. You might assume that spending time in a boat on a river would be a lovely way to earn a high school sports credit. But you should know that the Exeter River is tidal, which means that sometimes it was five o'clock in the morning when I was in a boat on the river earning my sports credit. Sometimes it was five o'clock in the morning and snowing—and the only thing that rubs the palms of your hands raw (to weep perchance to bleed) faster than a 10-foot oar wet from rain is a 10-foot oar wet and cold from snow. On those mornings, I would stand on the dock waiting for everyone in my boat to arrive, and I would nearly weep myself. What am I doing here?

But then my boatmates would all arrive—with bedhead hairdos and creases of bedsheets pressed into their cheeks—and I would know that what I was doing here was not letting them down. After all, a crew is all or nothing, and I wasn't about to make everyone else's rising before the sun a total loss. I simply liked my boatmates too much for that.

High school wasn't easy for me. I didn't arrive from elementary school a self-conscious person, but I became one in boarding school, and by the time orientation week was up. It's a pressure cooker, people say, and so it was for me—though

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not because of the workload, considerable as it was, but because I felt noticed, watched, scrutinized. There was no privacy, and there was no mercy. It was a house of mirrors with see-through glass walls, except for when I was tied in on the boat—feet physically tied into bolted down shoes, in a rainstorm, in a snowstorm, in the heat of a June afternoon. Paradoxical though it seems, in my boat on the river I was free because, though strapped down and in agony at times, here I was also surrounded by good will and good friends.

The times when I've laughed like I laughed that day on the river—uncontrolled, unselfconscious—are rare; they usually coincide with times in my life when I feel safe and free. The times when I've heard, either from myself or someone else, such laughter as this—spontaneous and generous and perhaps even generative—are few. It's a rare gift really—coming from outside and entering in, a surprising but welcome guest. To my mind, laughter of this sort is a sign of the Holy Spirit's presence just as rustling leaves are a sign of the wind. And it's this sort of laughter that I imagine came over Sarah on that hot day when the Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre.

We should remember that it would have been exciting to receive such guests as these—whether or not Sarah and Abraham recognized them as the Lord. Remember as a kid when your parents would have friends over in the evening—a dinner party or a bridge club? It was exciting to have guests in the house! Not so different, though thousands of years ago, visitors would have brought entertainment in the stories they'd tell about who they were and where they'd been and where they were going. Likewise, guests would have made it so everyone in the household could eat special food. When my son Toby returned home from a three-day visit to his grandmother's house last fall, he told me about how Grama Sugar and Grampy Buzz eat ice cream for dinner! In a later conversation, my mother told me about how when Toby comes to visit, they all eat ice cream for dinner! And, she wondered, could he come again soon? Not so different, though thousands of years ago, Abraham and Sarah likely ate of the curds and milk and the calf Abraham had prepared, and the cakes Sarah had made of choice flour; they likely all enjoyed the good food and cool water on that hot day when not much else was happening.

Not much, that is, until one of the three guests asked, "Where is your wife, Sarah?" which would have been surprising because it wasn't customary for women to co-host this sort of thing, but also because this stranger knew Sarah's name. "There, in the tent," Abraham said, perhaps as if the answer should have been obvious. Where else would she be? So I do wonder, why did the guest ask this question? Was he checking up on this couple's adherence to social convention? Was he hinting that perhaps Sarah should come and join them to hear the news? "I will surely return to you in due season," he said. Or did he mean for he to be out of earshot all together? "Your wife, Sarah, shall have a son." Perhaps he meant for it to happen just as it did—that Sarah would overhear the conversation, this conversation that became the moment when Sarah first conceived of her son, but that she would also be alone so to have her moment of un-self-conscious laughter, this laughter that amounted to the consummation of the Holy Spirit with Sarah's flesh, this laughter that came to her like an unexpected but most welcome guest, that entered her like a thrilling gasp, and that grew in her as the son whom she would name, in Hebrew Isaac, in English laughter.

We have no reason to think Sarah was wrong to laugh. On the contrary, we have every reason to think it was a good thing that she did. After all, the story goes on to assure us, "The Lord dealt with Sarah as he had said. Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age." Nonetheless, I'd bet that 99 percent of all commentary on this story makes some mention of Sarah's having been wrong to laugh. "God appears in stranger's garb," goes the text of one hymn I can think of, "with surprises we resist, bringing news we disregard, challenges too soon dismissed. Laughing at God's promises, we, like Sarah, need to know, God, whose love astonishes, wills that we should learn and grow." But I don't think Sarah's laughter was resistant or disregarding or dismissive. I suppose some laughter is—laughter whose parent is cynicism or sarcasm or skepticism. But Sarah's laughter, far from serving some resistance in her, may have been a sign of her utter openness to this surprising news. Sarah's laughter, far from serving to disregard as impossible the promised turn of events, might have been the opening of a way for the impossible to be made real. Sarah's laughter, far from dismissing these wandering strangers, welcomed them in—to her home, to her hearing, to her womb. A belly laugh, indeed!

There is so much to be serious about these days that it might even feel inconsiderate—sacrilegious!—to laugh. The fact that the Bible's one story to feature laughter is so often taken to be about how wrong it is to laugh only increases the chance that we practice the common piety of seriousness. But what if we've been wrong to think Sarah wrong? What if Sarah isn't a model of what not to do, but a model of what to do? Condemn Sarah for laughing? No way. Better to pray that we all have such cause to laugh as well, and so little self-control as to hand ourselves over to such joy.

— Elizabeth Goodman

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Tillie and The Hammer

Years before it dawned, I was introduced to the concept of the women's movement in a most bizarre way. It was in the 50s, when females in our western Pennsylvania coal town were expected to know their place. Most of the men worked the local mines or in the nearby Pittsburgh steel mills, but whatever her husband's occupation, a wife's role was clear: caring for the house and kids, submitting to sex on demand, and keeping her mouth shut when Johnny came home drunk every Friday, having spent half his paycheck treating himself and everyone else to beers and boilermakers at Yarmul's Tavern. Should she object, the likely result was a telltale swelling over the cheekbone, or sometimes a black eye or bloody lip. Nor could she expect any sympathy. Townspeople would merely shake their heads and remark, "When is she going to learn to shut up?"

Although there was no drinking or violence in my own household, it was clear, to me at least, that my father was in charge. Both of my parents worked in our family grocery, and my father needed my mother's help, but he also wanted her to keep a clean house and have dinner on the table every night. Given the tenor of the times, and because I was my daddy's boy, I thought my mother should accept her role. But she resisted, preferring to work in the store instead of keeping house. This was an ongoing conflict, and it led to recurring disharmony in our home, and sometimes to anguish in my boyhood heart.

It was just after one of their unsettling squabbles that I set off, brooding, for an evening at the town's summer carnival. Itching for the opportunity to blow off steam, I soon came upon the perfect scenario.

My friends were already there, milling around "The Hammer," a test-of-strength machine that involved banging a mallet onto a lever board and propelling a metal bar up a twenty-foot vertical column. When it reached the top, the bar would clang a big silver bell, followed by a trumpet blast and a neon Superman swooping around in elliptical orbit.

We watched as a couple of guys tried and failed, but after a wiry high school kid lit it up and strutted away with a starry-eyed girl on his arm, none of us could resist the challenge. When it was my turn, I was shocked at how heavy the mallet was. It was three tries for a dime, but no one was even remotely successful, each of our pathetic attempts drawing a raunchy chorus of boos and jeers.

At that point we spotted Gene Beaumont, a square-jawed man's man whose physical prowess was the stuff of local legend. Gene was a foreman at Bethlehem Steel, and a volunteer fireman who was in charge of running the carnival. He was also a nice guy who would sneak a free hot dog to a kid who couldn't afford it. As he walked by, he was balancing an enormous box of bingo cards on his shoulder. We called out to him.

"Hey, Gene. C'mon over here. Show us how to ring this thing."

Gene stopped and slid the bingo cards to the ground. Then he approached The Hammer, his muscular upper body flexing through a torso-tight tee shirt. A soft smirk crossed his features as he picked up the massive mallet with one hand, placed his other arm behind his back, and cracked the machine so hard that the metal ringer nearly knocked the bell off its hinges. While we stood there gawking, Gene put the mallet down, easily lifted the hefty box onto his shoulder and walked off, the whole performance all the more majestic because he hadn't spoken a word.

We were still buzzing about it when Tillie Kawczyk (pronounced "Cowcheck") happened by with two of her lady friends. In her mid-forties, Tillie was barely five feet tall and couldn't have weighed much more than ninety pounds, but because of a feisty attitude and a big, gravelly voice, she projected an image that was way out of proportion to her petite frame. Her friends were both big women, but little Tillie led their parade.

Tillie's ensemble that evening consisted of a frumpy housedress and a pair of oversized men's black wingtips with no socks. Her mousy hair was rolled up in plastic curlers. Bloodshot eyes and a lurching gait made it obvious that she had recently knocked back a snootful at Yarmul's.

As she approached The Hammer, she abruptly stopped and sized up the machine by inclining her tiny head from side to side, exactly like a scrawny squirrel trying to figure out how to approach a birdfeeder.

"I wanna try it!" she announced in her raspy growl.

My buddies and I cracked up. The mallet was nearly as big as she was. "Yeah, Tillie. Go for it," we hooted. "Ring the bell, Tillie. You can do it."

She shot us a disdainful sidelong glance and fished a dime from her pocket. Charlie Ulanosky, another volunteer fireman who was the attendant for The Hammer, looked at her doubtfully.

"You sure you want to try this, Tillie? You could hurt yourself."

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"Giddaway!" she scoffed, shoving the dime at him. "Gimme that thing."

Charlie regarded her thoughtfully for a moment, then shrugged and surrendered the mallet.

"Woohoo! Go, Tillie!" my friend Ookie Tacola taunted. "Maybe you can win a pair o' ladies shoes."

"Just shut up, Ookie," she said. "Why don'tcha go drag your old man outta the beer garden. He's prob'ly passed out on the floor in there."

Ookie was unfazed. "Yeah, yeah. I'll betcha you drank more'n he did!"

"Never mind, you li'l snot. Just keep outta my way!"

At first, when she tried to pick up the mallet she couldn't budge its unwieldy head, but then she strained mightily and managed to raise it a few feet. Soon her grip loosened, and to our delight the mallet fell with a thud onto the sawdust covered ground.

"Good one, Tillie," Ookie ridiculed. "That was really close. I think I heard the bell ring!"

I thought that would be the end of it, but her two inebriated friends continued to encourage her.

"Thass okay, Tillie," they cheered. "Don't pay no mind to them bozos. Give it 'nother shot."

Which she did, this time leaning the end of the handle against her concave midsection, bending her knees, and grunting the heavy mallet directly above her head. But again it was too much for her, and after it circled for a precarious moment, she was forced to let go and scurry from underneath it as it fell.

By now we were collapsing all over each other, but Charlie the attendant maintained a somber expression and made a move to take the mallet away from her.

"Tillie," he said, "this is gettin' dangerous. Maybe you should stop. Here's your dime back."

Charlie was a huge guy, nearly three times Tillie's weight, but when she turned her beady red eyes on him he stopped short.

"I ain't done yet!" she sneered.

Breathing heavily, jaw set, she stared at the mallet with a hatred that demanded total silence.

And then it happened ...

She gripped the handle and began to swing the heavy head sideways in a pendulum pattern, back and forth, back and forth, mesmerizing the onlookers while managing to keep her balance as each arc grew wider. Then, using the mallet's momentum, she abruptly yanked it to vertical, let out an earsplitting, primordial screech that made the hairs on the back of my neck stand up, and redirected the swing arc in a downward direction.

As the mallet found its mark, centrifugal force lifted Tillie's feet off the ground. Then, astonishingly, the metal bar took off and soared like a roman candle.

Our disbelieving eyes followed it up, and up, until … *Bang*! The big bell clanged sharply, Superman swooped around his celestial circle, and neon lights flashed while trumpets mocked us with brassy fanfare.

The effect was like a sucker punch. There was a collective gasp. My jaw dropped. Ookie jerked reflexively, lost his footing, and fell to the ground. Charlie Ulanosky, normally a mild mannered gentleman and careful with his language, stood with his hands on his hips and blurted out loudly, "Holy shit!".

Tillie and her friends went into instant celebration. They shrieked. They hugged each other. They claimed their stuffed animal prize and staggered back to Yarmul's, yapping like magpies and shocking onlookers with their boisterous cursing. We watched them, dumbstruck, until they were out of sight.

Ookie, covered in sawdust, broke the silence.

"Jeez! How the hell'd she do that?"

The rest of us answered in unison. "Shut up, Ookie."

In time I came to realize that raw strength was secondary to placement and leverage in causing that carnival machine to ring its bell. Nevertheless, Tillie's big moment would become more to me than just the stuff of an entertaining story. Viewing it in retrospect, I think that's when my perception of women started to change. I would watch my mother in the store and sense that her role there might be indispensable. The girls in school took on a different persona, especially the smart ones in class and the tomboys on the playground. Later, when women demanded equal opportunity and equal pay, I had much less of a problem than many of my male peers in accepting their arguments. Each time I heard a discussion about whether a woman could do a man's job, or serve in the military, or run a company, I thought about Tillie.

I thought about how she handled The Hammer. I thought about the way she dismissed our derisive taunts and stood up to big Charlie Ulanosky. I thought about the sheer determination that belied her diminutive body.

I thought about her a lot.

I still do.

— David Shifrin

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Jeramy in Goat Rock Wilderness (Mt. Ranier in background, and with Serena at the Canadian border.

Dispatches from the Trail

Jeramy Vallianos, who grew up in Monterey, set out from the Mexican border in early spring to through hike the Pacific Crest Trail. He and his partner, Serena Becker, reached the Canadian border in October. Here's Jeramy's latest report.

From the dried-out desert heat and million wildflower shades of a southern California spring to the drenched-bright temperate forest fall on into the early winters of the rugged North Cascade Mountains, all the days, seasons, and changes have unfolded on this winding old journey through the Western landscape.

We set out into Washington during a late summer warm spell, a week of clear blue skies and hot days as we moved north from the Columbia Gorge and past the cascading ice glaciers of Mt. Adams and the high peaks and passes of the Goat Rocks Wilderness Area. Sitting beside lakes and in clear streams and high meadows, walking old forests, the alpine lit up with crimson blueberry fields and yellow-tipped grasses. we were thankful for the sunshine and realized it would be fleeting—and surely it wasn't long before the rains came tumbling down, emptying from the skies as great billows of cloud covered and uncovered the mountains.

In the central Cascades the rain poured and we walked a landscape pocked with clear-cut after clear-cut, thick brush and young tree plantations soaking us to the bone as we pushed through. Masses of huckleberries, Douglas fir saplings, fungi emerging from intricate mycelial webs, our dripping raingear, the gray rains indifferent and drenching it all. Howling out on the exposed western flank of Blowout Mountain, the wind pelting us, cloud vapor whipping by, and we only could keep moving and accept the water, breathe in the cold, wake up in the morning, put on the wet layers and start it all again. Eventually we passed through the cuts, returning to the cover of the old conifer forests, dark tree-tops cutting through the fog, western hemlock and red cedar canopies providing shelter, broad golden devil's club leaves catching the drips, vine maple all vivid yellow and red, the bracken ferns browning and fading.

Farther north we moved into the roadless areas of Alpine Lake and Glacier

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Peak Wilderness, climbing and descending deep valleys cut by the sharp gray-blue fingers of Glacier Peak, its churning silt rivers leaving powerful marks on the land: thousands of scattered trees and massive swaths of disappeared riparian slopes that were sent tumbling to the sea during the devastating "1,000 year flood" of November 2003.

For the finale it was high adventure in the North Cascades, waiting out 72 hours of snow with the wonderful people of Mazama and Winthrop, returning to Rainy Pass under clear blue skies, kicking through powder drifts, the cold sunshine bright on the peaks, silent old spiraled black stones glistening with the snows, wind rumbling by. We slowly walked a blank still trail unmarked by humans, only broken by the traveling tracks of the local inhabitants: deer, elk, cougar, coyote, bear, and scrambling chipmunks. Three days of breaking trail, exhilarated, mindful, cold, and ecstatic along the open ridges and golden tamaracks, raptors sailing in the winds, enveloped by silence. Our last full day out we climbed up to the crest of high Lakeview Ridge as the orange-red sun began to sink behind the mountains and lit the path. Reaching the crest we see the near-full moon rising above jagged Three Fool's Peak, its purple-blue light meeting the fading sun, and the whole land so lucid and beautiful, stone peaks, the steep valleys and rivers descending ocean-bound far below, amazed and humbled by the immensity, by the howling is-ness of it all.

What a process and experience to be able to take part in, reflecting on all the places and people, and feeling so grateful for the opportunity. We crossed into Canada the next afternoon, October 13, spent a few hours at the border monument reading the register entries of friends and realizing the walk had come to its resolution. Since then we've had warm, dry nights in hostels and the homes of friends and family, sitting beside woodstove fires considering the dark snowy mountains and blowing winds of the Cascades and our friends still hiking there.

Countless thanks to everyone who has participated and helped in the process of this trip. It has been wonderful to hear from you and to have your support along the way. Many thanks to all who made the fundraiser a success as well; together we have raised over $2,000 and counting, closing in on raising $1 for every one of the 2,500 plus miles that we've walked.

Today we are setting out for Ashland to walk one more stretch of this trail, from southern Oregon into California's Marble Mountain Range. We'll send an update when we have a chance. Peace,

— Jeramy Vallianos

For pictures and notes along the trail go to www.walkforwild.blogspot.com, and for environmental information go to www.walkforwild.org.

Ugandan Children's Choir Concert at Keswick

Watoto Children's Choir from Uganda will presents a Concert of Hope, Friday, October 31, at 7 p.m. at New England Keswick, 73 Chestnut Hill Rd., Monterey.

The Watoto Children's Choir travel internationally to help raise an understanding of the plight of Africa's orphans. Watoto's performances are a soulful blend of native African rhythms, contemporary Gospel music, and ethnic dance. This is a great opportunity for all ethnicities and communities to come together for a spiritual and cultural event! We encourage you to bring children, families, friends, and neighbors of all ages and enjoy this Concert of Hope.

Keswick's annual Thanksgiving Dinner, scheduled for Saturday, November 1, has been cancelled.

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Berkshire Humane Society Pet Food Drive

Berkshire Humane Society has begun a countywide effort to help Berkshire pet owners supplement their pet food supplies during the upcoming cold and costly winter. Acknowledging that "Tough Times Hurt Everyone," the shelter is working with business owners, animal lovers, and interested community members to help pet owners for whom the cost of feeding a pet is or will become so burdensome that surrender of the animal to a shelter may seem preferable. The goal of BHS is to enable companion animals to remain at home—and well fed—this winter and, the shelter hopes, thereafter.

BHS has long maintained a pet food bank at the shelter at 214 Barker Road in Pittsfield. Stocked with donations from community members, the food bank currently offers pet food to approximately 70 pet owners and their 150 companion animals in the greater Pittsfield area each month. The "Tough Times Hurt Everyone" program has been developed to help meet the pet food needs of north and south county residents who, because of high gas prices or other reasons, do not have easy access to the shelter.

Under the leadership of BHS board member Bette Ellenbogen and with the collaboration of Irie's Pet Food Pantry in Stockbridge, the south county effort has been underway since mid-August. An outpouring of support from the community has resulted in numerous generous donations of wet and dry cat, dog, and rabbit food as well as several cash donations. BHS expects to start a similar program in north county in October.

Those who would like to join the south county effort are invited to bring any brand of pet food to one of several south county collection sites, including Wild Birds Country Store, The Berkshire Coop, VCA All Caring Animal Hospital, Legacy Bank in the Big Y Plaza, Southern Berkshire Regional Community Center, and Chez Pet, all in Great Barrington; the First Congregational Church in Lee; Lenox Town Hall; BensDotter's Pet Foods in Sheffield; St. Joseph Church in Stockbridge; and the West Stockbridge Post Office. Volunteers will pick up the donated pet food from the collection sites and bring it to local food pantries and other social service agencies for distribution.

BHS offers a very warm 'thank you' to all the south county residents whose enthusiasm and generosity have gotten this program off to a great start.

Senior Health Fair Nov. 7

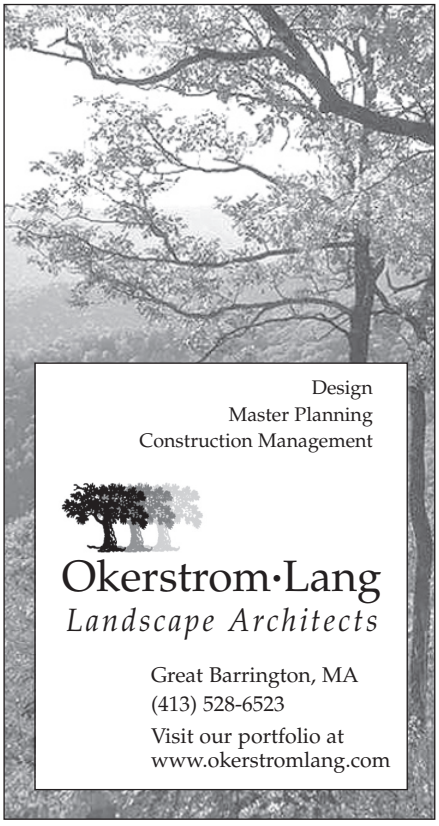
On Friday, November 7, from 9:30–11:30 a.m. a Senior Health & Benefits Fair will be held at Berkshire South Community Center in Great Barrington. Seniors, caregivers, and health professionals are welcome. This event is is coordinated by Community Health Programs and is free to the general public. If you are interested in sharing your information, please call Luci at 413-528- 9311 ext. 2147.

CATA Art for Awareness

Community Access to the Arts (CATA), a nonprofit organization providing arts workshops to people with disabilities in Berkshire County, has announced a new initiative.

The venture offers local businesses and individuals three types of holiday cards featuring images created by CATA's artists with disabilities. Choices include printed cards in packs of 20, handmade collage cards, and a 2009 calendar card. All cards come with envelopes and can be customized with seasonal messages. CATA artists receive a design fee for artwork used and get paid by the hour to produce handmade cards.

For more information, call CATA at 413-528-5485 or visit www.community-accesstothearts.org.



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Calendar

Every Monday (exc. holidays): Select Board meeting, 4 p.m., Town Hall. No meeting on Nov. 10.

Friday, October 31:

Trick or Treating in Monterey, 5–7 p.m.

Watoto Children's Choir from Uganda presents Concert of Hope, 7 p.m., New England Keswick, 73 Chestnut Hill Rd., Monterey. See p. 29.

Thursday, November 6: CET Solar Energy Seminar, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., Lenox Town Hall auditorium, 6 Walker Street in Lenox. $10 (BerkShares accepted), advance registration required (413-445-4556 ext. 25/cynthiag@cetonline.org).

Friday, November 7:

Senior Health and Benefit Fair, 9:30–11:30 a.m., Berkshire South Community Center, Great Barrington. Free, sponsored by CHP. Information: 413-528-9311 ext. 2147.

Friday Film & Discussion, Sandisfield Arts Center, 7:00 p.m. *Iran is Not The Problem,* documentary, 79 mins. Information: 413-528-9385.

Tuesday, November 11:

Veteran's Day observance, 10:45 a.m., Meetinghouse steps.

Town Hall, Library closed.

Thursday, November 13: Flu Clinic, Town Hall Meeting Room, 1–3 p.m. See p. 4.

Contributors

We thank the following folks for their recent contributions. Your support makes it possible for us to continue publishing.

William & Dorothy Enlund
Roy Liemer
Patricia Stencel
Melissa Hochstettler
Ann Vetter
Mary Beth & James Lubeck
John Martin & Jill Lawrence
The Collins/Schreider Family
Gerard & Andrea Esposito

Wednesday, November 19: Community Potluck Dinner, 6 p.m. Meetinghouse Fellowship Hall. Program by Monterey Affordable Housing Committee. See p. 15.

Tuesday, November 18: Free Health Screening, Community Health Program, 10 a.m., Town Hall.

Saturday, November 22:

Monterey Meets Africa: Reception for Dr. Ruth Engo, 2–4 p.m., Monterey Meetinghouse. See p. 19.

Square and contra dancing, 8:30–11:30 p.m., Dewey Hall, Rt. 7, Sheffield. Music by Mountain Laurel. Caller Jeff Walker. All dances are taught; beginners and children are welcome. Adults $8–10, children $5. Information 528-9385.

Sunday, November 23: Program about Massachusetts Disability Law Center, presented by attorney Nancy Svirida, 3 p.m. Monterey Meetinghouse. Sponsored by Gould Farm. Public is invited.

Thursday, November 27: Thanksgiving, Town Offices closed.

Friday, November 28: Town Offices closed.

Friday, Saturday, November 28, 29: Fair Trade Holiday Gift Sale, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Gould Farm Harvest Barn (directions at www.gouldfarm.org).

Saturday, November 29: Volunteers needed to help set up ice rink, 10 a.m., Firehouse pavilion.

ॐ

The Observer
September 26 – October 25

High temp. (9/28)	68°
Low temp. (10/24)	23°
Avg. high temp.	57.9°
Avg. low temp.	37.5°
Avg. temp.	47.7°
Total rainfall	2.3 in.

Rainfall occurred on 15 days.
Trace of snow on 2 days.

Vikki True
singing songs of
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Contributions from local artists this month:
Rachel Arnow, p. 17; Maureen Banner, pp. 15, 18, 23; George Emmons, p. 21; Bonner McAllester, p. 22.

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